

# Opening up Pandora's Box

by Julio Noboa Polanco



Artwork by Mary Agnes Rodriguez

While millions are wondering where this *globalocal* pandemic is taking us as we struggle to maintain ourselves fed, healthy and disinfected, the official and proclaimed leaders are taking advantage of our preoccupation with survival to unleash a Pandora's Box of maladies.

All this to ensure, maintain and extend their power and wealth at our expense!

Not only was there an attempt by Trump and Trumpers to deny the coming tidal wave of pandemic, ignoring even official reports and scientific projections. Not only is there already a systemic inequality that ensures that the poor and people of color will always receive the worst brunt of death and destruction. Now, the GOP Trumpers have opened up a Pandora's Box of evil maneuvers which are unquestionably cruel, inhumane and unconstitutional.

All of these responses and numerous others are unmistakable evidence that the United States under Trump as a nation

and an Empire is on the verge of decline, disarray and disintegration. Our nation is no longer the world leader during this time of global crises, nor even a reluctant follower of authentic world leadership. Our nation is now being led by a spoiled brat who throws twitter temper tantrums, attacking perceived adversaries.

Even worse during this pandemic pandemonium is the lack of authentic alternative leadership from the official democratic party establishment, the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

It has also become painfully obvious that the chosen contender, Joe Biden is demonstrably unable to communicate clearly, to control outbursts of anger, or to be present at the moment even when in public. Beyond his cognitive decline, there is enough in Biden's political history to damage his candidacy, let alone his disrespect for women's personal space and the emergence of a very credible sexual assault allegation.

To all this we could add the fact that there is absolutely no enthusiasm for Biden among many Democrats, most especially Latino voters and those under 50. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that the Democratic leadership will replace Biden with a truly viable candidate from the many that ran in the primary who can more easily defeat Trump.

Our only hope is that woke Americans understand what is happening and will not accept without intelligent protest or strategic resistance these destructive responses (see attached list) to the pandemic which Naomi Klein has accurately labeled, *Disaster Capitalism*.

Finally, there has to also be an investigation and an accounting of the damage Trump has already done and continues to do without which we would place at increasingly dangerous risk the very lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans.

*BIO: Julio Noboa Polanco, former Esperanza boardmember, is now a retired freelance writer living in Costa Rica with his wife, Elsa, also a former boardmember.*

## In no particular order, are these Dirty Dozen...

1. Dangerous misinformation campaigns and attacks on legitimate media
2. Privatizing and corporatizing the pandemic response for profit by enabling gross profiteering from testing, treatment and later from the vaccine
3. Trillions given via grants, loans and tax breaks to corporations and Wall Street financiers, and even payments to evangelical churches, while providing meager, limited and temporary relief to workers and small businesses
4. Undercounting the actual level of viral crises and "protecting" the economy by providing limited and inadequate testing
5. Relaxation and elimination of critical environmental standards and protections
6. Mandating that meat producers reopen their industries without requiring that their workers, mostly immigrant and minority, obtain protections
7. Destruction of civil rights, including criminalizing the right to protest against fossil fuel pipelines and more recently, police brutality
8. Relying on market conditions of supply and demand for essential medical supplies thereby denying and delaying them to frontline workers, costing thousands of lives
9. Using voter suppression measures such as the Wisconsin GOP did by holding risky in-person elections and invalidating tens of thousands of mailed-in ballots
10. Using the excuse of the pandemic to abrogate women's constitutional right to an abortion despite the fact most of these do not occur in hospitals
11. The official incitement of white supremacist protests with assault weapons, utilizing neo-fascist tactics to intimidate and threaten violence against local governments, let alone liberals, progressives, immigrants, and gays
12. The medical and genocidal neglect of prisoners effectively condemned to cruel and unusual punishment, as well as thousands of immigrants and asylum seekers already living in sub-human conditions in private prisons which profit from this modern form of slavery